

THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA  
FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE MECHANIC ARTS

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Hall of the Institute,

Philadelphia, February 8, 1933.

Report No. 2942.

Investigating The Multi-Motored Amphibion

invented by

Mr. Igor I. Sikorsky, of Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Application dated March 13, 1931.

## THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

## For the Promotion of the Mechanic Arts

Committee on Science and  
the Arts Case No. 2942.

Hall of the Institute,

Philadelphia, February 8, 1933.

The Franklin Institute of the State of Pennsylvania, acting through its Committee on Science and the Arts, investigating the Multi-Motored Amphibion invented by Mr. Igor I. Sikorsky, of Bridgeport, Connecticut, reports as follows:

Our attention was first called to Mr. Sikorsky's United States Patent granted for a device for the direction control of airplanes, but as our study of this invention and his development of several types of airplanes through many years, progressed, it was decided that in addition to an investigation of this device, his work in airplane design and construction should be included in this report.

Mr. Igor I. Sikorsky was born in Kieff, Russia, in 1889, and obtained his education in the Mechanical College of the Kieff Polytechnical Institute. He became interested in aviation at an early age and after a number of years of studying, designing and construction of the more simple forms of airplanes, made the first successful multi-motored airplane in 1913. This plane was driven by four 100 h.p. motors and was followed by another four-



1 motored plane capable of lifting, in addition to its own weight, 10,340 pounds.  
2 More than fifty successful flights were made with this plane.

3 His four-motored planes made in 1914 established a number of  
4 world's records including a 1000 mile flight from Petrograd to Kieff and re-  
5 turn without accident or forced landings. This was the first long cross  
6 country flight made by a multi-motored plane.

7 In this same year Mr. Sikorsky built a series of large multi-  
8 motored airplanes, the largest having a total weight of 17,600 pounds when  
9 carrying a useful load of 6600 pounds. This plane was equipped with four  
10 220 h.p. Renault motors.

11 During the World War of 1914-17, seventy-three Sikorsky air-  
12 planes were built and delivered to the Russian Army by the Russo-Baltic Works  
13 in Petrograd. These planes made more than 400 flights, made the first heavy  
14 air bombardments and but one of them was brought down in action. The safe  
15 return of many of these planes after one or two of their motors had been put  
16 out of commission proved the superiority of the multi-motored plane.

17 In 1919 Mr. Sikorsky came to the United States and became an  
18 American citizen. The same year he began to study the aviation requirements  
19 of this country.

20 In 1923 the Sikorsky Aero Engineering Corporation was formed  
21 and the twin-engined S-29 which had a cabin capacity of fourteen passengers  
22 was built. This corporation was absorbed in 1925 by the Sikorsky Manufac-  
23 turing Corporation of which Mr. Sikorsky is President.

24 Many different types of planes were developed and manufactured  
25 by this Corporation, one of the most notable being the S-36, an eight seater



1 amphibion equipped with two Wright J-5 engines. This was the first multi-  
2 motored amphibion to be flown successfully.

3 During the same year there was developed by this Corporation  
4 the S-38, a new model amphibion equipped with two Pratt & Whitney Wasp engines  
5 of 410 H.p. and having a seating capacity of from ten to twelve persons.

6 The success that has been secured by the later type of airplane  
7 developed by Mr. Sikorsky appears to establish the advantage of the Multi-  
8 motored principle that may be stated as the ability of a fully loaded multi-  
9 motored airplane to continue to fly using less than its full number of power  
10 plants.

11 The successful application of this principle enables a pilot  
12 to take off for an extended flight with reasonable assurance that he will be  
13 able to reach his destination without either loss of his freight or injury  
14 to his passengers.

15 Mr. Sikorsky made application for a United States Patent on  
16 his Multi-Motored Flying Machine on March 9, 1923 and Patent No. 1,560,869  
17 was issued on November 10, 1923.

18 The purpose of the invention, as stated in the patent, is to  
19 automatically correct the tendency of a multi-motored airplane to veer from  
20 its course when one of its motors fails to operate. The method of securing  
21 this result is shown in Plate I, made from a drawing in the patent. The  
22 Plate shows a three motored plane, motor 8 being placed at the forward end  
23 of the fuselage and motors 9 and 10 being symmetrically located, one on each  
24 side of the center line as shown in Figure 1. Two rudders 15 and 16 are  
25 mounted, each on a vertical axis on the tail of the plane and can be used to



1 control the direction of flight by the pilot by means of the foot pedals 21  
2 and 22, when all the motors are operating normally. If, however, one of the  
3 motors - 9, for example - fails, the tendency is for motor 10 to veer the  
4 plane to the left as soon as motor 9 fails. Since the tail rudders 15 and  
5 16 are located in the air stream sent back by the motors the effect of these  
6 streams is zero when both motors are running normally but is to keep the plane  
7 on its course if one motor fails and the effect of the air stream is unbalanced.  
8 Not only is that action automatic but it goes into effect immediately as soon as  
9 the motor fails.

10 The different figures shown in Plate I indicate different forms  
11 of rudders that may be used dependant upon the conditions, form of the plane  
12 and results to be obtained. Figure 6 shows one form in which a part 31, of  
13 the rudder is fixed in position while part 30 is movable.

14 Plate II shows the Multi-motored amphibion embodying the auto-  
15 matic control. This plane is of especial value for use where the landing is  
16 to be made on water instead of on landing fields that are frequently at some  
17 distance from the business center of the city.

18 There has been an increasing demand for this type of plane which  
19 is used by airway companies, business firms and individuals.

20 Up to the present time nearly 100 multi-motored airplanes and  
21 amphibions have been constructed from Mr. Sikorsky's design and under his  
22 supervision since his arrival in America. These include the two forty-four  
23 (44) passenger multi-motored "American Clipper" and "Caribbean Clipper", said  
24 to be the largest heavier-than-air aircraft now in regular operation in any  
25 airline in the world. These are four-motored amphibions, shown in Plate III,



and are used in South American service in both the Pan American Airways and the Pan American-Grace Airways. These two companies cover the following routes:

Miami	to	Barranquilla, South America
"	"	San Juan, Porto Rico
Panama Canal	"	Talara in Northern Peru

And on several other sections of the airways.

Following is a list of owners of Sikorsky Multi-motored planes:

Pan American Airways, Inc., New York  
Pan American-Grace Airways, Inc., South America  
Varney Air Service, Ltd., California  
Inter-Island Airways, Ltd., Honolulu  
Northwest Airways, Inc., Wisconsin  
Canadian Airways, Ltd., Canada  
Miller Airways, Inc., Canada  
Alpine Airways, Inc., Massachusetts  
Scadta Airways, Colombia  
Personal Flying Service, Ltd., England

The following information was obtained regarding the prior art of multi-motored planes. In 1894 Sir Hiram Maxim, in England, built a steam powered large airplane whose pusher propellers were driven by two engines totalling 320 h.p. This machine never was in the air in controlled free flight.

Clement Ader, in France, in 1897, built a monoplane named the "Avian". It was steam powered and had two tractor propellers, each driven by an engine. Observers of a test run stated that the machine left the ground for a short hop.

The Short Brothers of Eastchurch, England, built two aeroplanes, one a monoplane with tandem engine - one a pusher and one a tractor - and the other a biplane. This biplane was (it is believed) in the first place, built with one engine driving a tractor airscrew and one engine driving a pusher



1 airscrew with the pilot sitting between. Later this aeroplane was altered so  
2 that one engine still drove a pusher airscrew but the other engine drove two  
3 tractor airscrews through a chain drive. These experiments were carried on  
4 about the end of 1912 and during 1913.

5 Technical Memorandum No. 478 of the National Advisory Committee  
6 for Aeronautics, refers to the early work of multi-motored planes as follows:

7 "The beginnings of the superairplane extend back  
8 into the prewar period. If the historical airplane  
9 of the Englishman, Hiram Maxim, be disregarded, the  
10 honor doubtless belongs to the Russian engineer  
11 Sikorsky for having designed and built the first  
12 serviceable superairplane. The first Sikorsky four-  
13 engined airplane was begun in 1912 and was finished  
14 and flown in 1913."

15 Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh was the pilot for the Sikorsky Am-  
16 phibion S-38 which he used in opening the Pan American Air Mail Service on Febru-  
17 ary 4, 1929. This service started from Miami and ended at Cristobal at the  
18 Caribbean end of the Panama Canal, on February 6th, bringing these two cities  
19 twelve days closer together.

20 This path finding flight opened the route to Latin America shown  
21 in Plate IV which has resulted in establishing mail and passenger communication  
22 over an extended airway that is proving of much service. The course is not  
23 only an extended one but is over much uninhabited country both forest and  
24 mountains, that required the freedom from failure that the Multi-motored am-  
25 phibion provides.

26 The Pan American Airways System includes both the East and the  
27 West coasts of South America. The extent of business carried on is shown by  
28 the statement that in 1930 more than 30,000 passengers were carried, as well



as 370,000 pounds of mail and express. The distance flown was more than 2,500,000 miles and though the route was more difficult than any in the United States there was not a passenger injured.

Through correspondence many favorable opinions were received from users of the Sikorsky planes.

In consideration of his pioneer work and inventions in the development of multi-motored airplanes of various types, for different uses, including amphibions and the largest combined planes for land and water service, and of his method of direction control of multi-motored machines by the use of an automatic stabilizer, THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE awards its HOWARD N. POTTS MEDAL to MR. IGOR I. SIKORSKY, of Bridgeport, Connecticut.



*Nathan Hayward*  
.....  
President.

*Howard McKeen*  
.....  
Secretary.

*Heerbael J. Clark*  
.....  
Chairman of the Committee on Science  
and the Arts.



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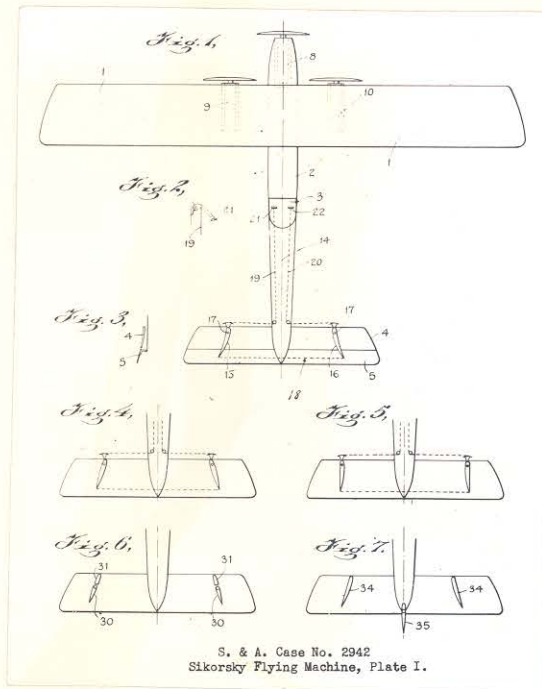
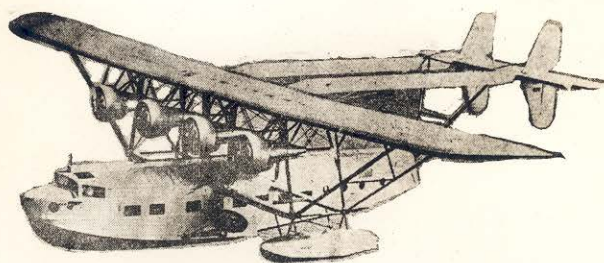


PLATE I.



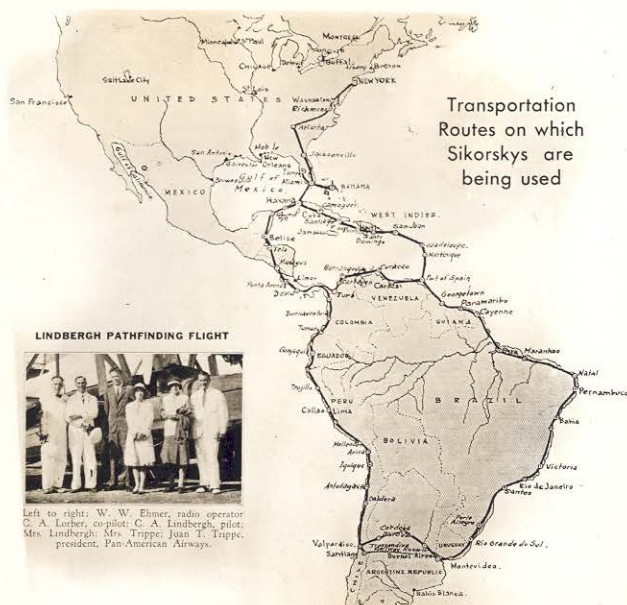
PLATE II.



The Caribbean Clipper, largest Amphibian plane with accommodations for 45 passengers, which will fly Dino Grandi, Italian Foreign Minister, and his party to Washington from New York today. It will be piloted by Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh.

S. & A. Case No. 2942  
Sikorsky Flying Machine, Plate III.

### PLATE III.



LINDBERGH PATHFINDING FLIGHT



Left to right: W. W. Elmer, radio operator  
C. A. Luther, co-pilot; C. A. Lindbergh, pilot;  
Mrs. Lindbergh; Mrs. Trapper; Juan T. Trapp,  
president, Pan-American Airways.

S. & A. Case No. 2942  
Sikorsky Flying Machine, Plate IV.

### PLATE IV.